

## THE EARTHLY PARADISE

men, painted a terrifying red. Momi took up his position behind the palisade of our hut, found a gap and thrust the barrel of the gun through it. We were at a loss to know what to do with the other gun. It scared us more than it ever scared the savages. 123\*

I'd always been sceptical of tales about the ferocity of primitive peoples. This was the moment to display my scepticism. We therefore let things take their course, as if the arrival at our hut of a horde of naked dwarfs, all painted red and armed with long bows and arrows, was the most natural event in the world, the sort of thing we'd been used to from childhood days in our own homeland. The Indians adopted just this tactic towards us! The moment came when we were surrounded by a mass of revelling, skipping little monsters, like goats at pasture. The womenfolk hung behind, hesitating to show themselves: many of them had children at the breast, and they feared the very sight of our beards would terrify them, and even cause their death through the 'evil eye'. Gathering them protectively to their bosoms, they laughed rather nervously and echoed the tongue-clicking that punctuated the chatter and the bewildering howls of the male Shiriana. For these were the Shiriana—the real thing, unlike Pancho's hewers of wood who lived now as mere vassals and had adopted the customs of the Soto.

One old fellow stood out among the rest. His hair was ruffled; he wore a perpetual smile and dangling testicles. 'Aasi,' he declared, 'aasi, aasi,' ending up with a clicking of his tongue and grunting deeply and explosively from his chest. We didn't then know that 'aasi' meant simply 'yes' in Shirian; we therefore called the old man Aasi. Later we came to know him for the chief of the Uana-Diklep tribe, whose camp lay one day's march east of Kiriochi. Aasi was intelligent and quick-witted, but his people were plunderers, infinitely resourceful. While the chief was smiling at the magazine photographs of actresses we had brought with us—he didn't understand what they were, but they drew his interest—his men and women, with methodical efficiency, were attempting to slip their pilfering hands through the cracks between the stakes that formed our back wall and make off with what they could. If the gap was too narrow for the grown-ups' hands, they maliciously urged on the children to try theirs. This innocent little game was one which it would have been interesting to observe from start to finish; unfortunately there was our dignity to be considered, as well as the old chief's integrity of character to be reckoned with. Laughing, he joined in as we chased off the women and children, and 123\* 609 • (181)

RED CLOTH AND GREEN FOREST

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123 speeded them with threats of dubious efficacy as they retreated to a safe  
● 609 distance.

'Ausi,' said the old man. We took him up in chorus and by evening the merriment reached its height, punctuated by the howls of the Shikians as they sampled our food supplies, grimacing over them like apes. The howling and shouting gradually gave place to something a little more musical; soon they were singing, and this in its turn excited them to dancing and stylized movements that were of great interest to us. Ausi repeated anything we said, without hesitation. Sometimes the imitation was perfect, but for the most part our barbarous language tied his tongue up, so that he would be saying 'gwestra' for 'stronger' (wizard) and 'chiribichappa' for 'acropolis', amid general hilarity.

By the time the Great Bear had appeared in the cold sky over the Sarisiriama, a certain madness had invaded us too, and in an innocent, untropical sort of way we ran madly amok. We got hold of the gun and fired shots into the air. This made the Indians jump for joy. Some of them started dancing and howling in a fine frenzy round and round the hut, sweating like pigs and led by Momi armed with a big aluminium saucepan on which he kept up a rhythmic beat with a machete. The song and dance finished when the performers had no strength left, and no voice. The most dogged of them, however, even after they had flung themselves down on the benches, or on the ground, or lay stretched out on the table, still managed a last raucous imitation of the refrain they had learned from us: 'Pawastappareche, che, che, che.'

When morning came the men of Ausi went off promising to return with bananas and sugar-cane: we undertook to purchase these, giving them in exchange those things which the women had vainly tried to lift from us. Then the long file of dirty dwarfs vanished among the trees, and with them our windsock which they had taken off its pole at some stage of the proceedings and were now carrying off as a trophy.

[115] We learned more that same day about the 'windsock' from Luis Antonio, a Shikian speaking perfect Spanish who had come up the river with two other Indians: they didn't exactly inspire confidence, though he presented them as brothers.

'I saw one of the Olseiri Shikians wearing it,' he told us, giving the Ausi men their proper name. 'He was running about in the woods with one leg on and one off.'

## RED CLOTH AND GREEN FOREST

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In the place of Hashimo, Uarema's elderly brother, we received an unexpected visit from two Sotos from the Upper Merevari. One was a mere youth, the other a good deal older, both of them as elegant as two young ladies, but with the bearing of true mountain folk for all that. The older was called Murucuyo—Morrocoy, that is, or Turtle. He was a chief from the headwaters of the Merevari, and the first Indian we encountered who gave us his real name quite openly. The Makiritari are always very reticent about their names, as if they are half-ashamed of them, and will sooner tell you they have no name at all, if they cannot lay claim to something 'rational' like Ramon or Pedro.

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Murucuyo wasn't much of a talker, while the younger man spent most of the time beautifying himself. His face painting was highly elaborate and his coiffure was so impeccably styled that it would have made a statue sigh with envy. These two had come from their home on the upper Merevari to see about a little business to do with boats for Pancho. The Shirians assailed them with questions, demanding answers with a rudely aggressive authority that was partly derived from our own presence among them, and Murucuyo grew quite frightened, shouting 'Taima, taima'—the Shirian for 'I don't know, I don't understand.'

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What we fortunately did succeed in making them understand was that they should take Jean with them, so that she could go to Pancho's place, and our heavy baggage could go with her. The girl could wait for us at the chief's hut, where there would be the Makiritari womenfolk, as inquisitive and full of chatter as monkeys, but kind and friendly, especially towards another woman. The two men were quite willing to take her, especially when we tried to make up for the linguistic poverty which hampered our conversation by adding a little gift or two. We summed up the two pilgrims and decided on a few things which would appeal to their vanity most: two mirrors, a comb and a lipstick. The lipstick was Jean's, and the Guayca snarled with greed when they saw it.

We advised Jean to stay quietly with Pancho, studying the Makiritari language and treating the women and children's ailments. And when the three of them disappeared round the river-bend, where the island ends and the Llan-tara rapids begin, Enrico and I looked at each other: we felt absolutely free. Goians and the Amazon, with all their forests, with all their howling populace of men and apes, were open to us. Only then could we be quite sure that the Samatari venture, which we'd dreamed of and dreaded too, would actually take shape.

RED CLOTH AND GREEN FOREST

136 know the world, a few excursions into those terrible waters where the very absence of peril means, for these lowland monsters, the greatest peril of all.

\* 143 The Samatari had now got quite used to having us in their midst and their primitive fear of us—the emotion which gives rise to an instinctive urge to kill—had disappeared utterly. The fear strangers evoke in them is twofold: [609] they are afraid of being killed, and of having their womenfolk raped. We hadn't killed anybody, and the women did not attract us. We left them in peace, even when they were driven by their insatiable professional curiosity to inspect our private parts.

From being merely tolerated, therefore, we soon passed quite naturally to the stage of having a rather more positive value placed upon us. Soon we were superior beings who had chosen their tribe as the privileged recipients of our friendship. This was without a doubt an auspicious sign for them, and one they must profit by. For the moment the profit which the medicine-man had in mind related only to matters appertaining to magic and moral spheres and had nothing to do with our persons. We ourselves, indeed, were not called upon to play an active part.

\* 123 Ceremonies of propitiation were enacted at night. The medicine-man would sit in his hammock with his feet dangling over the fire, invoking prosperity for his own people and ruin and death for their enemies (who were doing the same thing, in the same spirit, at the same moment, in some other corner of the forest). But the Samatari had us with them: the effect of their invocations would travel far and fast, like the explosion of the bombamall.

\* 123 The medicine-man would suddenly sit up in his hammock as if he was cold, and after burbling something incomprehensible, slowly shout out the name of a fruit—for instance, *monama*. The last syllable was held for some time, with modulations that reminded me of an echo rebounding from hill to hill. When this solo was over the men's chorus—they were all sitting round the fire in their hammocks, too—would take up the refrain, reciting a long litany full of mournful verses. According to the brief explanations given by Luis Antonio, the gist of it was: much *monama* for the Samatari and none for their enemies. Let hunger strike them down. They are bad men. A moment's silence would

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SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

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[For information on the capture and subsequent treatment of the author and his party by a nomadic group of the Yanoama, called by the author "Samatari," see category 123, pp. 92-140.]

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123 Then the inhabitants of the aldeia began to come back from the forest. Seeing him lying motionless in a puddle of blood, each group that came supposed that he was dead, and they were mourning greatly for a few minutes, lamenting him, before those who knew what had happened were able to quiet them. Finally, one of the older men with sufficient presence of mind said that he wanted to take him to the aldeia, if this were possible.

First the man tried to walk on his own feet to the aldeia, but "Joashimocaoue" was very weak and in much pain, and he could not do this at all. Therefore a hammock was sent for. They tied this to a post before rolling up the wounded man in it; two men carried him to the aldeia. That night he again became unconscious. Two women came and told us, "We are weeping again." I recommended to David that he stay and pray while I sent to see what could be done.

Upon arriving in the aldeia, I found him unconscious in his hammock. They wanted me to put some medicine on his wounds, but there he was, unconscious. I said, "Let us pray first." Almost all of the believers who were there, and even those who had never professed to be believers, prayed with me for him. I prayed first and then they all repeated it together, asking God to spare his life. I had never seen a gathering of Yonomama praying so fervently before or since then. I do not know exactly how long we were praying, but it must have been about an hour.

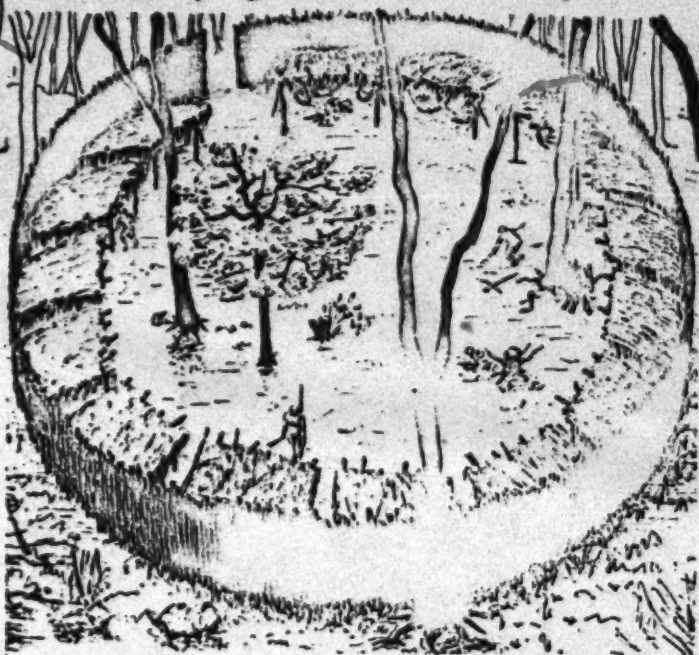
/163/ When all had finished praying, we looked over and there he was, conscious again. He sat up and asked me if they had treated his wounds. I put sulfa powder on them and bandaged them. After this he did not lose consciousness again, and although his wounds were very painful, he went along well without any complications arising, although the tip of the poisoned point must still have been stuck in some part of his back.

721 The men of Majecototjetí returned from their raid on the Liacoatjetí without finding anyone in their houses.

123 A little before this an old woman from Shibaatfa-tjetí  
75 visited some of her Majecototjetí relatives and told them how in  
[609] her aldeia they did not like foreigners, because they were always  
curing people. When someone in the aldeia was wounded, they

361 entered. It was deserted; the women and children had doubt-  
123 less fled at our approach and were now probably hiding in the  
[609] forest or the plantation. This would explain why the men  
123 had been unwilling to allow me to wander off on my own.  
[291] After a time they began to filter back. The boys were the

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WAIKA FORTIFIED VILLAGE, "PLATANAL"

123 first to return, the younger ones wearing nothing but an armlet  
[291] above the elbow, and the older ones wearing the string round  
their hips and knotted to the prepuce. Then came the women,  
the oldest first, followed by the younger ones with their babies.  
[302] All were completely naked and all wore their hair cut in the  
pudding-basin fashion favoured by the men. They kept close  
together, chattering; some began idly swinging in their ham-  
mocks in their houses. When we tried to approach them the  
men followed close on our steps.

593 the enraged husband struck his wife in the face with a burn-  
684 ing log, severely burning her mouth. Burning is a common  
punishment, and many women bear immense scars from wounds  
inflicted by enraged husbands. Just before I left the field  
[578] a fight developed in Patanowā-tedi between a man and his  
wife's lover. The lover was killed in the fight and the  
woman's husband punished her by cutting off her ears with a  
[65] machete. Some women have been killed by enraged husbands,  
but in most of these cases, the deaths resulted from wounds  
that were not intended to be fatal.

607 Despite the fact that the tie between spouses is  
613 weak, marriages create strong ties between a man and his  
+621 sister's husband. This tie is of great significance in the  
+628 social organization of the Yanomamō, as it is stable, well  
[578] defined, non-ambiguous and politically important. The  
brother-in-law (shoriwā) tie is the key link in alliances  
between local descent groups, both within and between vil-  
lages.

607 The term shoriwā (brother-in-law, MoBrSo, FaSiSo,  
601 friend) is used constantly by Yanomamō men when they address  
any new male acquaintance. Shoriwā implies a set of obliga-  
tions and duties between the speakers. One can depend on his  
shoriwā for material goods and gifts, and a request for such  
items from a shoriwā is not easily denied: shoriwā is, in  
addition to goods-giver, wife-giver. The Yanomamō use this  
[797] term for foreigners as well; they use it so frequently that  
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[01] the Salesian Missionaries who have recently contacted a few

607 groups of Yanomamö have begun referring to the entire tribe  
601 as "Los Shori." The Yanomamö address the missionaries with  
799 this term hoping to maximize their chances of obtaining  
• [607] desirable manufactured goods such as machetes and axes.  
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607 Men who are not related by blood constantly remind  
521 each other of obligations when they use this kinship term.  
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A brother-in-law deserves respect, fair treatment, and grati-  
tude. As the term is reciprocal, a conversation between two  
shoriwä is punctuated frequently by these constant reminders  
that each owes the other goods, services and respect by virtue  
of the fact that they stand in wife-giver/wife-receiver rela-  
tionship to each other. Such conversations, usually about  
material goods or women, strike the outsider as something of  
verbal contests to determine which of the two speakers is  
more of a shoriwä than the other, i.e., who owes the other  
more goods, services, gratitude and generosity. One who has  
actually given a sister to the other's group has an advantage,  
in a trading sense, as he can more legitimately claim goods  
from the wife receiver.

\* 628 When men visit the village of an ally to beg, trade or  
574 participate in feasts, they call all non-related men of that  
609 village 'brother-in-law,' emphasizing the fact that they  
601 stand in wife-giver relationship to them, and deserve, there-  
583 fore, the generosity of the hosts.

\* 628 Alliances between villages involve, in addition to  
527 military aid, mutual feasting and trading. It must be  
574 remembered that alliances, no matter how many marriage ex-  
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